



[Billing Code 4140-01-P]

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

Prospective Grant of Exclusive License: Miniature Serial Sectioning Microtome for Block-face Imaging

AGENCY: National Institutes of Health, HHS

ACTION: Notice

SUMMARY: This is notice, in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR part 404, that the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Health and Human Services, is contemplating the grant of an exclusive license to Carl Zeiss Microscopy GmbH, which is located in Germany, to practice the inventions embodied in the following patent applications:

1. US Provisional Application 61/991,929, filed May 12, 2014 (E-121-2014/0-US-01)
2. PCT Application PCT/US2015/030359, filed May 12, 2015 (E-121-2014/0-PCT-02)

The patent rights in these inventions have been assigned to the United States of America.

The prospective start-up exclusive license territory may be worldwide and the field of use may be limited to microtomes for scanning electron microscopes (SEMs) or light microscopes for life science applications.

DATES: Only written comments and /or applications for a license which are received by the NIH Office of Technology Transfer on or before [INSERT DATE THIRTY (30) DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION OF NOTICE IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] will be considered.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the patent application, inquiries, comments, and other materials relating to the contemplated exclusive license should be directed to: Susan Ano, Ph.D., NINDS Technology Transfer and Development Branch, 31 Center Drive, Suite 8A52, MS2540, Bethesda, MD 20892; Telephone: (301) 435-5515; E-mail: anos@mail.nih.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A microtome device is used in a variety of microcopy techniques to remove very thin (e.g., in the tens of nanometers range) portions from the top of a sample between successive images. This technology discloses a design for a microtome device that offers several unique features and advantages over commercially available microtomes. A prototype of the microtome has been built and demonstrated to work with a serial block-face scanning electron microscopy in order to serially collect ultrathin sections from plastic embedded biological tissues. This microtome design allows for a sample to be cut at a location removed from the electron beam axis, reducing interference from debris and allowing imaging at a greater range of working distances. This microtome device is lightweight and easy to install utilizing the built-in stage of existing microscopes such that a sample's position and orientation can be controlled along three-axes of rectilinear translation and two axes of rotation. This microtome design utilizes a diamond blade coupled to both the base plate and an actuator to control the movement of the blade in a direction perpendicular to the exposed surface of the pedestal, while producing an output signal that indicates the blade location with respect to the base plate. Advantageously, this allows for a stage coupled pedestal to be moved accurately from an imaging location on the beam axis to a cutting location off the beam axis.

The prospective start-up exclusive license may be granted unless within thirty (30) days from the date of this published notice, the NIH receives written evidence and argument that establishes that the grant of the license would not be consistent with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 209 and 37 CFR Part 404.

Complete applications for a license in the field of use filed in response to this notice will be treated as objections to the grant of the contemplated start-up exclusive license. Comments and objections submitted to this notice will not be made available for public inspection and, to the extent permitted by law, will not be released under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

Dated: September 28, 2015.

Richard U. Rodriguez,
Acting Director,
Office of Technology Transfer,
National Institutes of Health.

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